

VZCZCXRO4997
RR RUEHAG RUEHROV RUEHTRO
DE RUEHLO #1632/01 1681532
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 161532Z JUN 08 ZDF CITE RUEHSD 0142W
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8938
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 0061
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0534
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1188

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 001632

NOFORN
SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - DECLASSIFICATION DATE CHANGED

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/13/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [UN](#) [UK](#)
SUBJECT: UK "DISAPPOINTED" WITH USG DECISION ON POLICY
TOWARD UNHRC

REF: STATE 61034

LONDON 00001632 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Classified by Political Minister Counselor Maura Connell
y for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The British Government is "disappointed with the USG decision to 'disengage'" with the UNHRC. Poloff delivered reftel demarche June 12 to Foreign Office Head of Human Rights, Democracy and Governance Group Susan Hyland and Human Rights UN officer Paul Edwards. The British Government had already been made aware of the USG decision not to participate in the UN Human Rights Council through discussions in Geneva. Hyland lamented that the USG has decided not to remain active within the body, saying the USG had been the strongest player in the minority team (of which HMG is a part) seeking to reform the body. Hyland pledged HMG will continue to work with the USG in the UN General Assembly and elsewhere to strengthen the UN's commitment to human rights. End Summary.

FCO "Sorry" Over U.S. Disengagement

¶2. (C) Hyland said the Foreign Office was "sorry" to learn of USG "disengagement" with the UN Human Rights Council. She said the USG had been the strongest player among the minority group of UN Member States who had sought to reform how the UN handles human rights affairs during the creation of the UN Human Rights Council. Poloff underscored the USG commitment to upholding human rights and noted that the USG would engage in the UNHRC on legal or other matters where there was no other appropriate fora. Hyland said the USG, and other Member States interested in reform including HMG, had made limited progress in making the UNHRC an improved body compared to its predecessor. This included keeping "some of the worst" nations in terms of human rights records from seeking seats on the Council. Hyland acknowledged British Government frustrations with the Council, including the removal of some individual mandates, the unbalanced criticism of Israel, and the ability of countries with a poor human rights record to "mobilize blocks" within the UN to keep the Council from examining their human rights record. On the plus side, she said the "universal review" of country human rights records was having effect.

¶3. (C) Hyland and Edwards said the U.S. media tended to focus on how the Council behaved toward Israel, but argued that the bulk of the Council's time and work was dedicated to other matters. Poloff said it was the position of the USG that the Council had been unbalanced in its criticism of

Israel and in its focus on that country. Hyland said HMG was of the view that "where there has been criticism of Israel, it has been unbalanced" but reiterated that the FCO does not take the view that the Council spends the bulk of its time on this issue.

HMG will Continue to Work in UNHRC

14. (C) Hyland said the Foreign Secretary and Ministers had taken the decision to continue to work on human rights issues in both the UN General Assembly and the UNHRC. Edwards said HMG felt "working from within the Council" was how HMG could best move the Council in the right direction. This is why the UK had sought a UNHRC seat. Hyland said HMG was "disappointed" in the USG decision, as the USG had been the strongest player in efforts to reform how the UN addresses human rights issues and had led in building the minority coalition seeking to shape the UNHRC.

15. (C/NF) Speaking personally, and not on behalf of HMG, Hyland said she was uncertain how the USG decision would strengthen the USG (or HMG's) ability to change how the UN handles human rights matters. She said that, as a negotiating tactic, any fresh effort to reform the UN, including through the UNGA in 2011 during the five-year review would encounter the "same players, and same voting patterns." She said the tendency in UN negotiations is for Member States to repeat their voting histories. The USG and HMG would again find themselves in a minority position. Hyland thought the USG and HMG had done a good job "battling from within" the Council and that the USG exit risked "raising the threshold" both governments would need to cross to reconstitute a better performing organization. Hyland said "we'll have to bake the cake with the same ingredients."

16. (C) Hyland and Edwards told Poloff the British Government

LONDON 00001632 002.3 OF 002

is committed to working with the USG on improving how the UN manages human rights issues. Hyland said HMG will work with the USG in the UNGA, and elsewhere, to achieve this aim.

Visit London's Classified Website:
http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:United_Kingdom
TUTTLE